

Army Corps of Engineers begins levee repairs and flood teams plan to work through night

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SEATTLE - The Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will have flood teams out overnight and tomorrow in the Chehalis, Puyallup, Nooksack and Snohomish river basins.

A flood team is actively repairing a levee, which sustained damage in last year's flooding, along the Nooksack River in Whatcom County and is monitoring other levees in the river basin. A flood team was sent to Shoalwater Bay on Saturday in response to a request for assistance from the Shoalwater Tribe provided 4,500 sandbags and strengthened a damaged flood berm there Sunday. The heaviest rainfall has been on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Chehalis River Basin, and teams are monitoring river basins throughout Western Washington.

The Corps took over the regulation of Wynoochee Dam on the Olympic Peninsula Sunday evening. The dam is owned by the city of Aberdeen and operated by Tacoma City Light. The Wynoochee River Basin has received 8.6 inches of rainfall in the past 24 hours. The good news is that Wynoochee Dam was below the normal flood pool by 15 feet (762 feet above mean sea level) when the Corps took it over.

Residents need to be aware that Wynoochee Dam only controls 20 percent of the drainage basin. Even minimum outflow from Wynoochee Dam cannot control impacts downstream, and residents need to be prepared for flooding and damages from high water.

It takes about 10 hours for the water released from Wynoochee Dam to reach the river gage at Black Creek at Montesano, Wash. Nearly all of the impacts to the Montesano area are from uncontrolled flows below the dam. The Corps will not increase outflows above minimum until after the peak has passed Montesano. A Corps information paper on Wynoochee Dam can be accessed on the Corps web site at [www.nws.usace.army.mil](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil) under Corps Topics.

Public Law 84-99 enables the Corps to assist state and local authorities in flood fight activities and cost share in the repair of flood protection structures. The purpose is to prevent loss of life and minimize property damage associated with severe weather.

The Corps activated its Emergency Operations Center and the Reservoir Control Center (RCC) this weekend in advance of the storm and continues to operate 24 hours a day. The National Weather Service issues severe weather, flood watches and warnings and should be consulted for that information.

For more information on the Corps, and up-to-date river forecasts, go to

[www.rws.usace.army.mil](http://www.rws.usace.army.mil) and click on Rivers and Reservoirs. Private citizens seeking sandbags should contact their local government offices.